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Evenings: (209) 562-2025

LANDMARK
REALTY

130 E. Honolulu
LINDSAY, CALIF. 93247

JOB DENNI/BROKER
(209) 562-5955

LANDMARK
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WHITE CHIEF MINE

MINERAL KING SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA

The only private land in White Chief Bowl. White Chief Bowl is 2.8 miles South of the Mineral King Pack Station. The Mineral King Pack Station is at the end of Mineral King Road.

Parcel size: 20.65 acres and surrounded by Mineral King Sequoia National Park.

Access: Hike or horseback - 1 hr. 30 min. No access during winter.

Next closest private land is 26 acres, 3 miles North, owned by Walt Disney.

White Chief Mine is at 9,600 feet and believed to be the highest silver mine in the United States.

Lake Creek and White Chief Creek run near the property.

There is a small water spring that flows through White Chief Mine on the property.

Build your private cabin on this property.

Price: $120,000

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MINERAL KING
Sequoia National Park
California

HIKING IN MINERAL KING — A GUIDE

Mineral King — the very name conjures up forgotten dreams of mineral wealth. For a few short years in the late 1870s, this quiet mountain valley promised to become another Comstock Lode, another fountain of rich silver ore as limitless as the great mines of Nevada. And like so many human dreams, these miners' visions were based as much on faith and optimism as on reality.

Optimism named Mineral King; optimism brought to this place the mining investments that made this small alpine valley accessible to the outside world. Optimism sent hopeful, if often ignorant, miners scrambling over Mineral King's awesome peaks, scratching out small rock-bound holes wherever a bit of "color" showed in the rock. Optimism brought men to Mineral King, and continued optimism clouded and confused their efforts. And finally, after nearly a decade of sacrifice, when the last remaining bit of optimism finally faded, the hardened miners realized that they had discovered something more enduring and more precious than silver, a simple mountain valley of exquisite beauty.

The miners of the 1870s were not the first men to visit the valley we now call Mineral King. Indians came here. Bedrock mortars, food-grinding holes worn deeply into solid rock, tell us of hundreds of years of continuous human occupation starting perhaps as early as 1000 A.D. European settlement in this part of California began in the early 1850s, but the rugged canyons and peaks that form the headwaters of the East Fork of the Kaweah River protected Mineral King from curious eyes. Not until 1864, when a hunter named James O'Farrell entered the region from the south, did Mineral King become a part of the known world. O'Farrell became a regular visitor to the valley, enjoying its tranquil summer beauty. In the summer of 1872, while pursuing a wounded deer, he discovered and claimed what he believed to be a mineral deposit. The following summer others came to search the colored mountains, and one, James Crabtree of Porterville, located the mine that would make Mineral King a household word in the mining industry.

Crabtree claimed the White Chief Mine in July, 1873, and within a few weeks the word was out. Silver had been discovered in the southern Sierra! Anxious prospectors streamed into the area that fall, staking claims wherever the colored and fractured mountains of Mineral King gave some small promise of mineral deposition. Winter soon forced the miners out of the district, but many plans were laid during the damp, cold winter of 1873-1874. When spring finally reached the high country, hundreds were waiting to enter the district and strike it rich.

Supported by the hopes that gave the Mineral King Mining District its name, the miners built a good trail to the remote valley and erected a small town on the open flats beneath the red peaks. While the newly formed New England Tunnel and Smelter Company attempted to mill the seemingly rich ore from Crabtree's White Chief Mine, other miners claimed mine after mine on the surrounding slopes. Dreams are not the same as silver, however, and the White Chief ores could not be reduced to metal. Avalanches hit the mine repeatedly during the winter months. Faith in the district began to evaporate. By 1877 the Mineral King mining boom seemed to be nearing its end.

In late 1878, however, new vigor and excitement returned to the district. Tom Fowler, a state senator from Visalia, announced that he had purchased O'Farrell's Empire Mine and was prepared to invest substantial sums towards its development. The summer of 1879 witnessed enormous activity in the district. In the space of one short alpine summer, Fowler constructed a road from Three Rivers to Mineral King, erected a stamp mill in Mineral King Valley, and connected his rapidly growing mine to the mill with a mile-long bucket tramway. Only one small problem developed in Fowler's carefully laid plans — the Empire Mine had no more silver to share than had the White Chief.

By 1880 Fowler's dream was dead, buried in a mountain of debts and swept away by the vicious winter avalanches of Empire Mountain itself. Fowler's road remained, however, and Mineral King became a quiet retreat for refugees from the summer heat of California's great Central Valley. In 1893 the government took an interest in the area and declared it as part of the Sierra Forest Preserve, the ancestor of our modern Sierran national forests.

After the turn of the century, the U.S. Forest Service began to lease recreational cabin sites in the Mineral King Valley, and the cabin communities that still dot the valley came into existence. In 1926 Congress enlarged Sequoia National Park so that the park almost surrounded the Mineral King Valley and the valley itself became a national forest game refuge.

Mineral King returned to the public eye in the late 1940s when the rapidly growing California ski industry noted the valley's heavy winter snows and convenient southerly location. Interest accelerated in the early 1960s in developing the area, and in 1965 the Forest Service solicited bids for the development of a major ski resort in the valley. Several serious proposals were made, and with a great deal of publicity, the Forest Service chose the Walt Disney Corporation to build and operate the new resort. The Disney bid called for large-scale development with a skiing capacity of 10,000 persons daily. Restaurants and hotels were to be scaled accordingly.

As the immense scale of the proposed development became apparent, opposition to the project began to develop. By the middle 1970s law suits filed to stop the project had resulted in a stalemate. Public opinion was deeply divided. Congress finally resolved the decade-long dilemma in 1978 when it transferred the valley to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks and directed that the area be managed for natural, rather than recreational, values.

Today, Mineral King's real treasure is apparent to all who visit this magic place. Here the natural beauties that exemplify California's Sierra Nevada as one of the earth's delights reach their climax. And the way to see these beauties is to walk! By hiking just a few miles, more than half a dozen lake basins that surround the valley floor may be reached. But don't underestimate these miles.

All the trails in Mineral King Valley begin at an altitude of at least 7500 feet, and all proceed steeply uphill to their destinations. Most hikers will feel the results of these altitudes in the form of increased shortness of breath or surprising tiredness. More serious problems such as headaches and nausea may indicate the onset of altitude sickness. The best cure is to move to a lower altitude. Let your body adjust to Mineral King's altitude for a day or two before you try an ambitious hike.

Once you've spent a day or two acclimating to this altitude, you are ready to try the trails. But first, some words of advice. Parking is limited in Mineral King. If possible, leave your car at your campsite or at your cabin, and walk to the trailhead. Secondly, while Mineral King has an extensive trail system and loop trails of several days duration may be taken, none of the trails described in this pamphlet is of the loop variety. Finally, there is no easy trail out of Mineral King. Every trail that begins at Mineral King must climb steeply to reach the alpine lake basins or the passes that dot the valley rim. For most hikers in good health, however, the effort is worth it. No exhilaration matches that of climbing into a high mountain basin.

Often the best way to first venture into the areas that surround Mineral King is with a ranger guide. During the summer months ranger-conducted walks are presented in Mineral King almost daily. For information check at the ranger station or in the current copy of the *Sequoia Bark* newspaper.

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ossing the bowl, the trail climbs steeply to a ridge
vered by that lover of high elevations, the foxtail
ne. From the ridge a panoramic view unfolds. To
southwest the peaks of White Chief and Farewell
p are visible. Crystal Creek descends steeply from
east, passing by the small Cobalt Lakes, before
descends into Mineral King Valley. The route
cends over broken talus until it finally arrives at
narrow outlet of Crystal Lake. Camping is best
the terrace just below the lake. The campsites,
il and small dam on Crystal Lake were built by the
. Whitney Power Company between 1903 and 1905
augment late summer flows in the East Fork.
day the Southern California Edison Co. operates
facility. Mineral Peak to the north of Crystal Lake
d Rainbow Mountain to the south both display the
iking meeting point of the light-colored granites
d darker metamorphic rocks that compose this
ountain. The rocks differ in age by nearly 100
llion years.

ere is no trail beyond Crystal Lake, but a short
ramble up the bluffs to the northeast will bring you
Little Crystal Lake.

ANKLIN LAKES TRAIL

stance: 5.4 miles (one way)
evation Gain: 2,527 feet
arting Point: Eagle-Mosquito parking area

eginning at the Eagle-Mosquito trailhead, the route
Franklin Lakes leaves the Eagle Lake trail about
of a mile beyond the trailhead, fords the
st Fork of the Kaweah River (dangerous when the
er is high), and joins the Farewell Gap-Franklin
kes trail a short distance up the valley. During
gh water, it's best to follow the road back across
e creek to the Pack Station where the trail begins.
is wide trail was at one time an old road leading
Aspen Flat, a quarter-mile ahead. The road was
andoned in the early 1970s and vehicles are no
nger allowed in this part of the valley. Boulder-
pping Crystal Creek, the trail leaves the valley
or and the old road and begins to climb in
rnest through manzanita, ceanothus, and isolated
nipers. About 1.5 miles up the trail, the outlet of
anklin Lakes is crossed. Here, the trail begins a
ries of short switchbacks before it reaches a major
il intersection. At this point, one trail continues
aight ahead for a distance of 4.5 miles to Farewell
ap (elev. 10,587 feet).

e Franklin Lakes route leads to the left and
eadily climbs the south slope of the steep valley
eated by Franklin Creek. The multicolored rock so
uch in evidence has been changed by heat and
essure until it no longer resembles the ancient
diments once deposited as sand and silt. Minerals such as silver and zinc, formed as part of these metamorphic rocks, gave rise to a silver rush of sorts during the period 1873-1880. Needless to say, the bonanza never occurred. Today, the treasure of Mineral King lies not in precious metals, but in its natural values. At the 9,900 foot elevation, the trail crosses Franklin Creek for the second time, still a mile or so from the lake. A few campsites are located here and prospect holes are much in evidence. A rock and masonery dam built in 1904-05 by Mt. Whitney Power Co. marks the beginning of Franklin Lake and the end of our route. Scattered foxtail pine and an occasional juniper dot the steep slopes surrounding the lake. You have come 5.4 miles and reached an elevation of 10,327 feet — welcome to the 'high Sierra'!

WHITE CHIEF TRAIL

Distance: Bowl: 2.9 miles (one way)
Valley's end: 4.1 miles
Elevation Gain: Bowl: 1,400 feet
Valley's end: 2,200 feet
Starting Point: Eagle-Mosquito parking area

The steep but very scenic trail to White Chief Canyon begins at the cabin area where the Mineral King Road ends. Parking is often difficult in this area. Please don't block access to cabins. Leaving the trailhead the route begins a gentle ascent, soon arriving at mysterious Spring Creek. This large stream issues full-blown from the mountainside a few hundred feet above the trail. A glance at the opposite, east side of Mineral King Valley gives a clue to the secret of Spring Creek. The white band visible across the canyon is marble, a soluble rock in which caves are often found. A similar marble band passes through the mountain above us and Spring Creek emerges from its caves. Where do you think the water started its trip down the mountain?

Past Spring Creek the trail ascends steadily up the west side of the Mineral King Valley. Contrast the vegetation on this slope with that visible across the valley. At this altitude the slopes of the Sierra usually are densely forested with red fir, but periodic snowslides thin the always-growing forest. Which side of the valley seems to show more signs of avalanches? Can you guess why?

One mile from the trailhead, the White Chief Trail separates from the trail that leads to Eagle and Mosquito Lakes. Take the left-hand fork and follow the steeply climbing and often rough trail to the lower rim of White Chief Basin. These steep bluffs offer a full sample of Mineral King's alpine conifers. Red fir, western white pine, foxtail pine, lodgepole pine and Sierra juniper are all found in this vicinity. Above these rocky bluffs the trail finds itself at the lower end of a gentle meadow area surrounded by rugged cliffs. Just as you reach the meadow look for signs of the old Crabtree Cabin. Built during the mining boom of the 1870s by the discoverer of the White Chief Mine, this ruin is perhaps the oldest remaining structure in the Mineral King area.

During mid-summer the White Chief meadows are a flower garden of rare variety and beauty. Compare the wet, streamside areas with the drier slopes that surround them. Do the same plants grow in both areas? But don't spend all your time looking at the flowers. Spectacular geology surrounds you. Look for signs of white marble, and study how White Chief Creek interacts with the marble formations. In late summer this creek totally disappears into the ground in the upper sections of the meadows. Where do you suppose it comes out again?

At the head of the meadows, the trail crosses the creek and climbs to the old White Chief Mine. Here, a nearly horizontal passageway has been blasted into the marble at the foot of the mine, and dangerous vertical shafts can be found above. Be careful. Miners tried to spend a winter here once. An avalanche in February, 1878, destroyed their bunkhouse and nearly brought an end to the company that owned this mine.

The trail, increasingly faint, continues for another mile above the mine, wandering through a scenic area pock-marked with caverns and sinkholes. The trail finally disappears altogether in the giant glacial cirque that forms the head of the canyon. Several old cabin ruins can be found in this area, one of them built into a natural cavern.

EAGLE LAKE TRAIL

Distance: 3.4 miles (one way)
Elevation Gain: 2,200 feet
Starting Point: Eagle-Mosquito parking area

The Eagle Lake Trail follows the same route as the White Chief trail for the first mile. At the junction take the right hand trail and proceed up toward Eagle Canyon. Take your time and enjoy the flowers. In the early part of the season the lupine and snow plants are abundant in the shady areas. In the meadows you might see rein orchis, leopard lily, Indian paintbrush or shooting stars. Eventually the trail gains the lower rim of Eagle Basin. Within one-quarter of a mile you'll see Eagle Creek disappearing into a large hole — a sink hole. Where the water goes is not known. Some suspect that it provides the water for Spring Creek (See description of White Chief hike). In the densely wooded area above the sink hole we arrive at another trail junction. To continue toward Eagle Lake take the left-hand fork. The trail climbs through a boulder field and finally emerges at Eagle Lake.

Surrounded by mountain crests, Eagle Lake is a typical glacially-formed lake called a tarn. An alpine glacier begins by accumulating snow in the highest parts of its range. As the depth of the snow increases, pressure changes the bottom layers to ice and the glacier begins to move under its own weight. As the glacier travels forward it carves and sculptures the rock over which it passes. Different rocks have different degrees of hardness. As glacial ice encounters harder rock, it rides up and over it. Eagle Lake is held in place by just such a ridge of erosion-resistant rock. The lake was dammed by the Mt. Whitney Power Co. in the early days of this century to enlarge its storage capacity.

MOSQUITO LAKE #1

Distance: 3.6 miles (one way)
Elevation Gain: 1,190 feet
Starting Point: Eagle-Mosquito parking area

White Chief, Eagle, and Mosquito Lakes share the same trail for 1 mile. Take the right hand trail at this junction and again at the next trail junction. The trail takes you up and over Miner's Ridge. You will drop about 200 feet to Mosquito Lake #1. The lake is surrounded by a red fir forest. While the trail ends mid-way up the lake, many people hike up the drainage to the other four lakes to fish for brook and rainbow trout. There is a steep climb to the next lake with no real trail but little elevation change from the second to the fifth lake.

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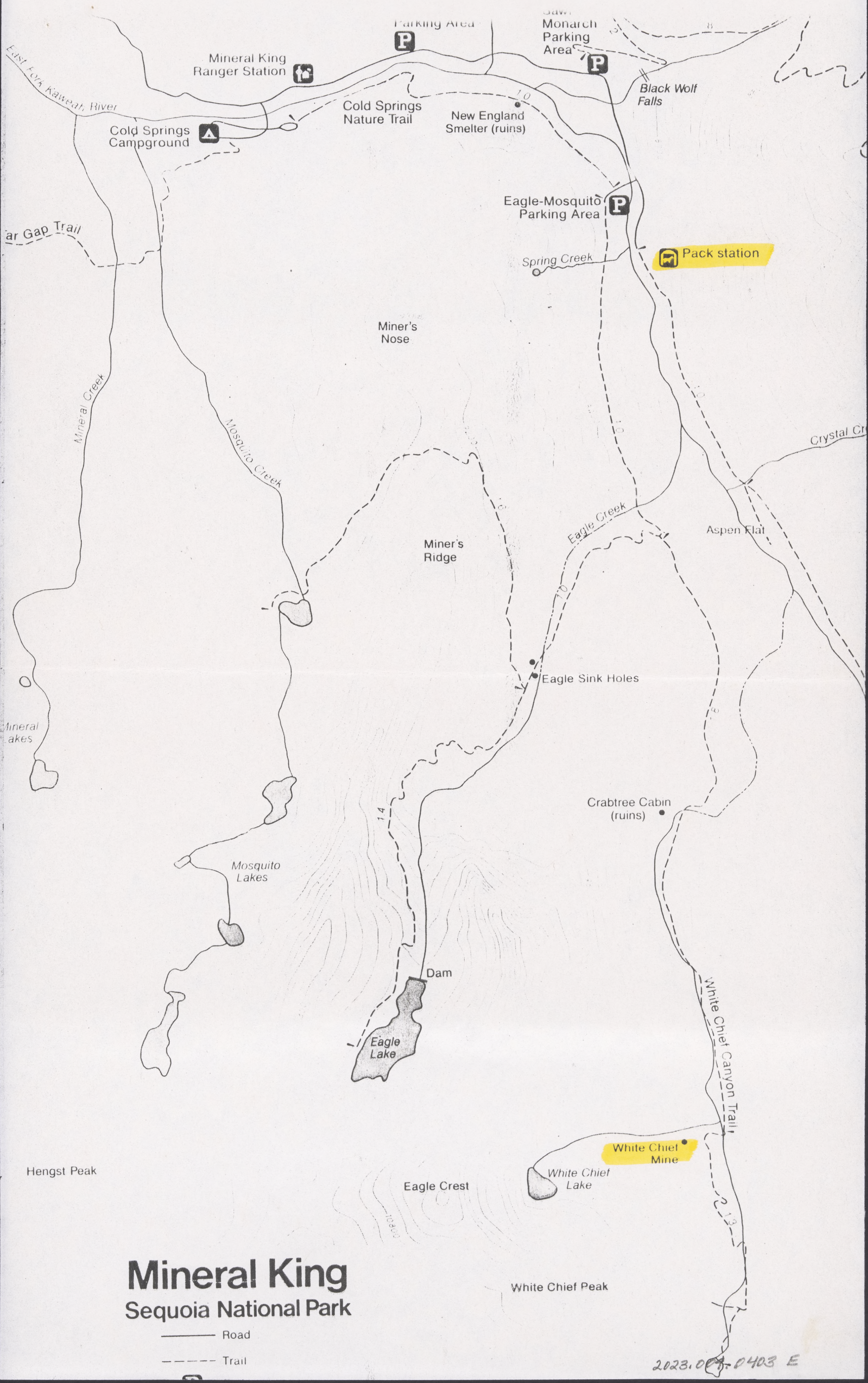

Mineral King

Sequoia National Park

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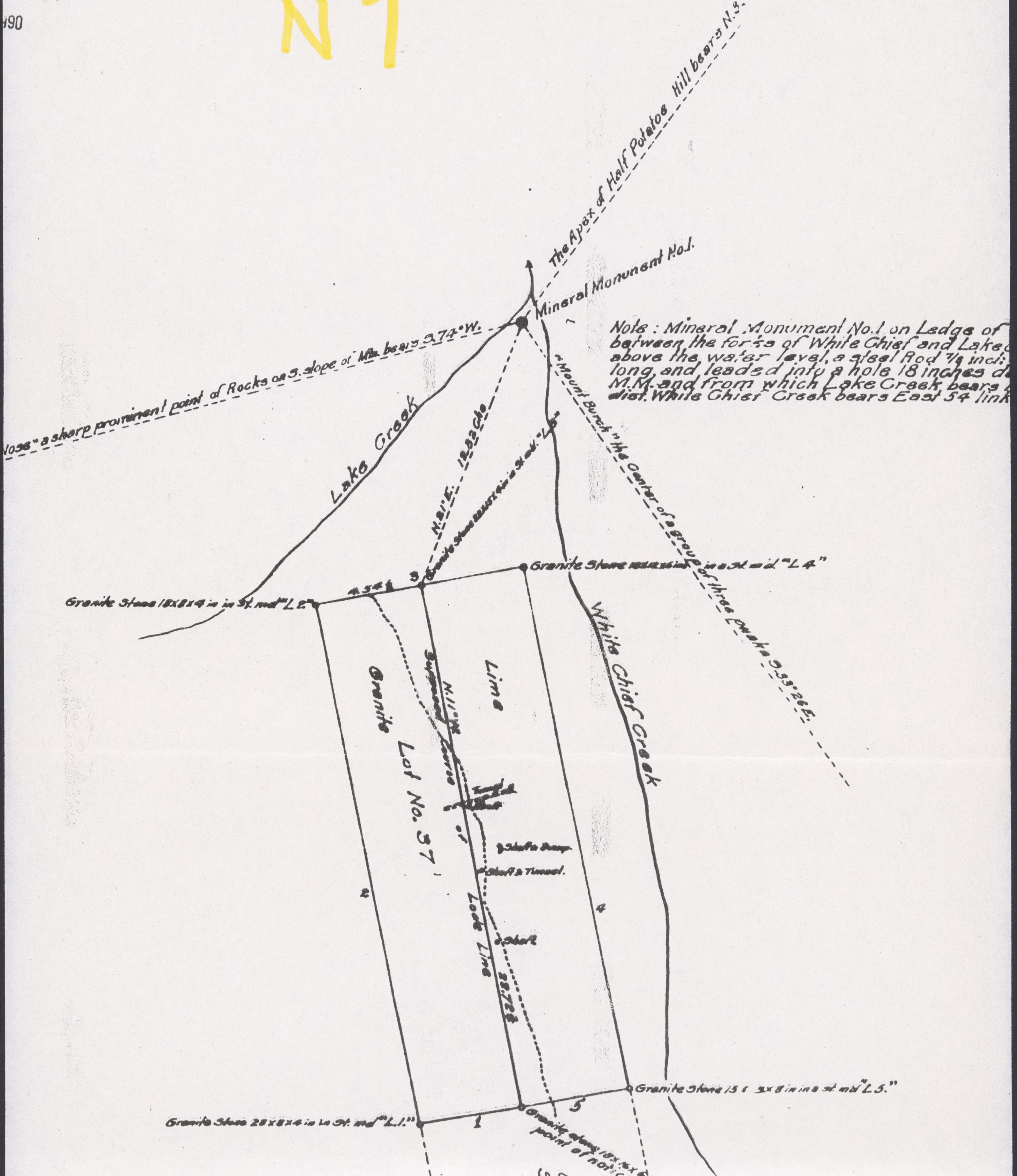
The Apex of Half Potatoe Hill bears N.3:
Mineral Monument No.1.
Nose" a sharp prominent point of Rocks on S. slope of Mtn bears S.74°W.
Note: Mineral Monument No.1 on Ledge of
between the forks of White Chief and Lake
above the water level, a steel Rod 7/8 inch
long, and leaded into a hole 18 inches d
M.M. and from which Lake Creek bears
dist. White Chief Creek bears East 54 link
"Mount Burch" the Center of a group of three peaks S.33°26'E.
Lake Creek
N.81°E. 18.82 chs
Granite Stone in St. md. "L3."
Granite Stone 18x8x14 in in St. md "L2"
4.54 ch
3
Granite Stone in St. md. "L4"
White Chief Creek
Granite
Lime
Supposed Course of Lode Line
N.11°W
28.72 ch
Lot No. 37
Tunnel
Shaft
Shafts Dump
Shaft & Tunnel.
Shaft
2
4
Granite Stone 15x3x8 in in St. md "L5."
5
1
Granite Stone 28x8x4 in in St. md "L1."
Granite stone 19x15x6 in in St. md "L6" point of notice of Location
Claim No.1 North
S.L. Goodhue & Co.

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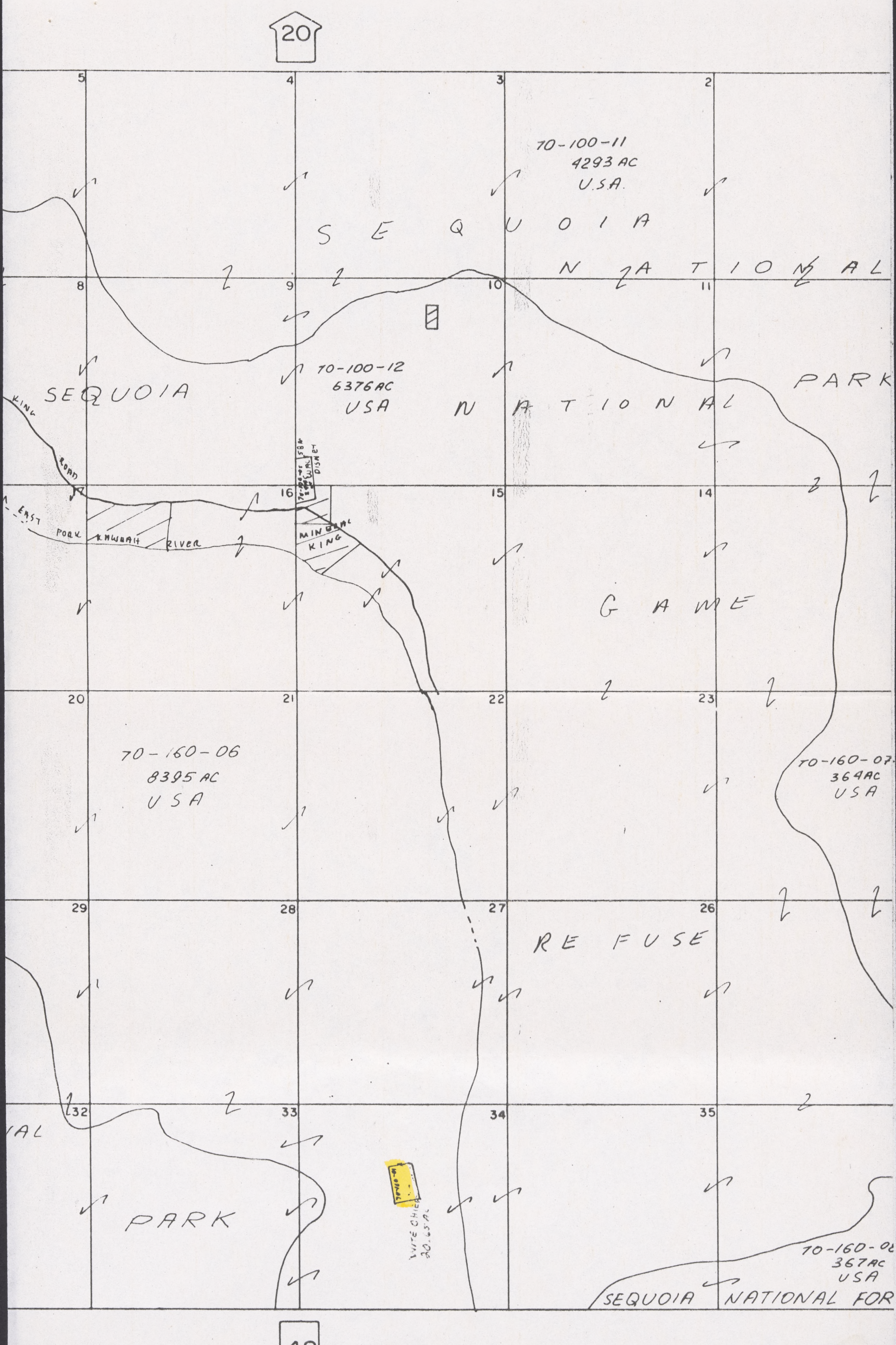

PLAT 3

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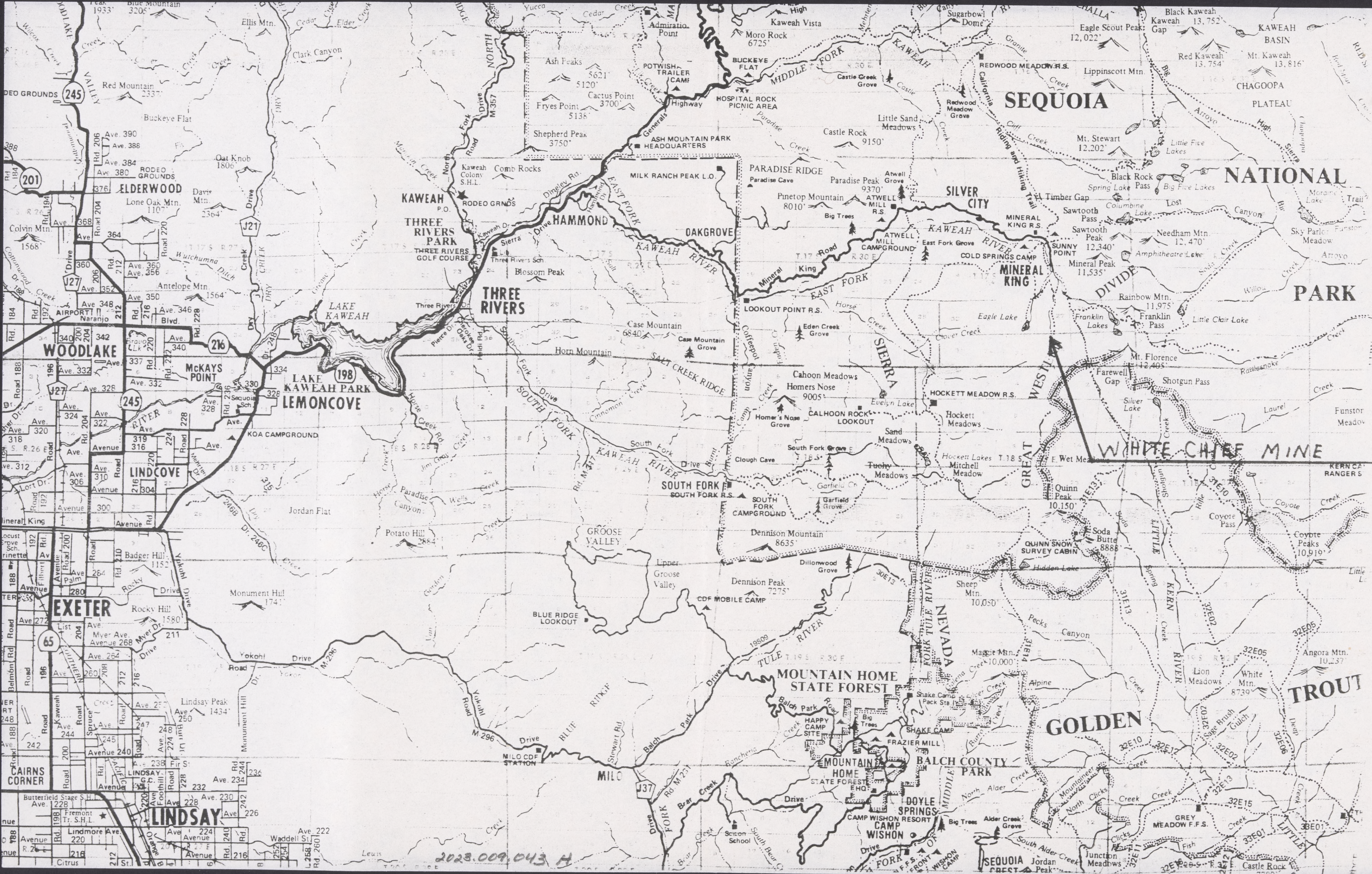

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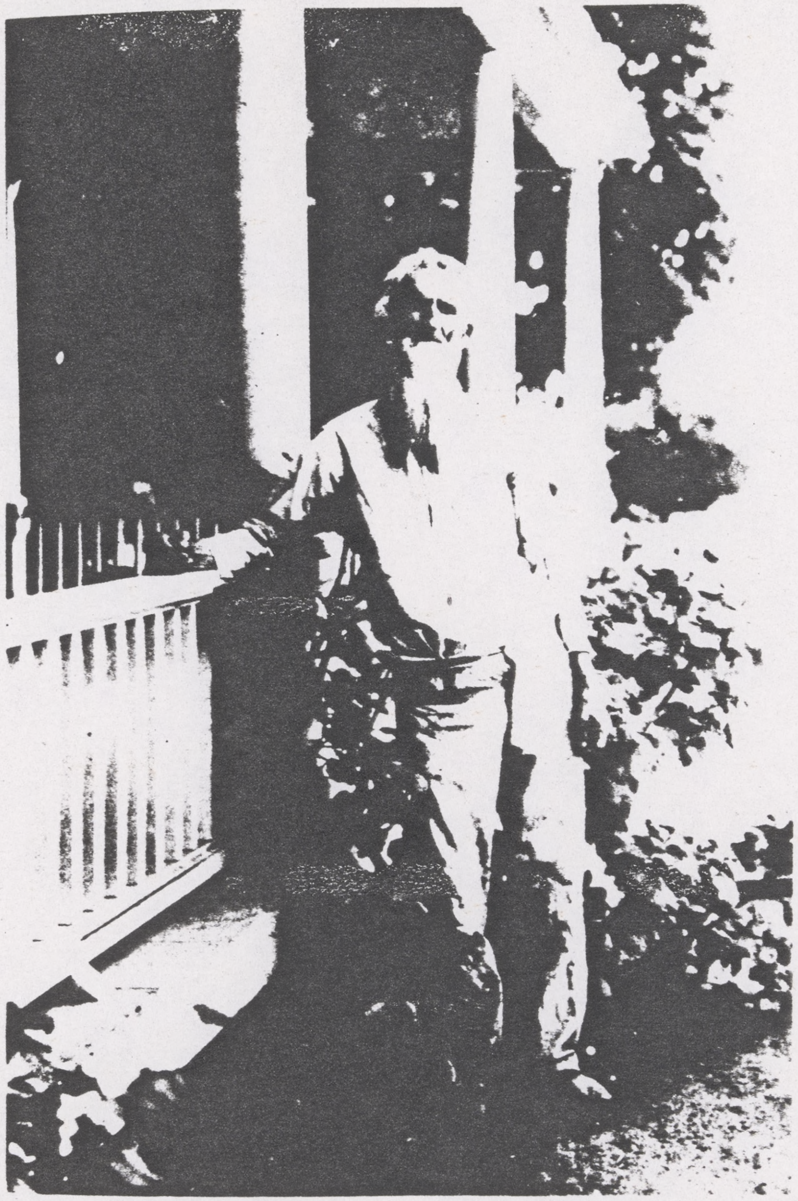
would not keep all that rich country for himself. Some day, part of it would be his.

And in that same month of August 1872 John Crabtree, Charles Belden, and George Loup were also camped in the Little Kern country. They had come to do a little hunting and prospecting and they, too, were discussing Harry's Bend and the potential of paying ore which Parole claimed was there. Rumors were growing about the valley and they sounded more promising as they spread. Some of the reports had actually been verified by miners who had prospected there and had found specimens of ore. Having known Parole on the White River diggings, Crabtree respected the quiet Irishman. He recalled Harry's belief that somewhere in the Sierra were hidden vast deposits of gold. His aim in life had been to find them. So perhaps these rumors of Harry's valley were true.

Crabtree and his two friends were ranchers and prospectors, but they were devout spiritualists, too. The three of them told of a startling experience they had on that moonlit August night. According to the earliest versions, this is the story John Crabtree told.

While they were sitting at their campfire on the Little Kern, a vision appeared before them. It was the spirit of a giant white Indian chief. He pointed northward and in a soft voice, told them of a peculiar place where the mountains were white and red and black. Within these mountains there were natural shafts and tunnels and caverns whose walls were interlaced with veins of gold. He told the men to saddle their horses and take the longest lengths of rope they had. Beckoning them to follow him, the white chief led the way.

They followed the Little Kern Canyon, which would have been difficult to climb in broad daylight and certainly impossible at night. But under the guidance of the white chief, the night's strange journey met with no problems at all. He led them up the western side of the canyon, above the timber line and on to steep, rocky slopes, veering their course toward some cliffs above a windy pass. They wound their way around the southern base of these cliffs toward the west. There they were stopped by a jagged, pinnacled granite wall with a sheer drop on its opposite side. They tethered the horses, then unwound the lengths of rope to scramble down the face of the wall.



J. A. Crabtree; Porterville rancher and prospector, one of the discoverers of the White Chief Mine.

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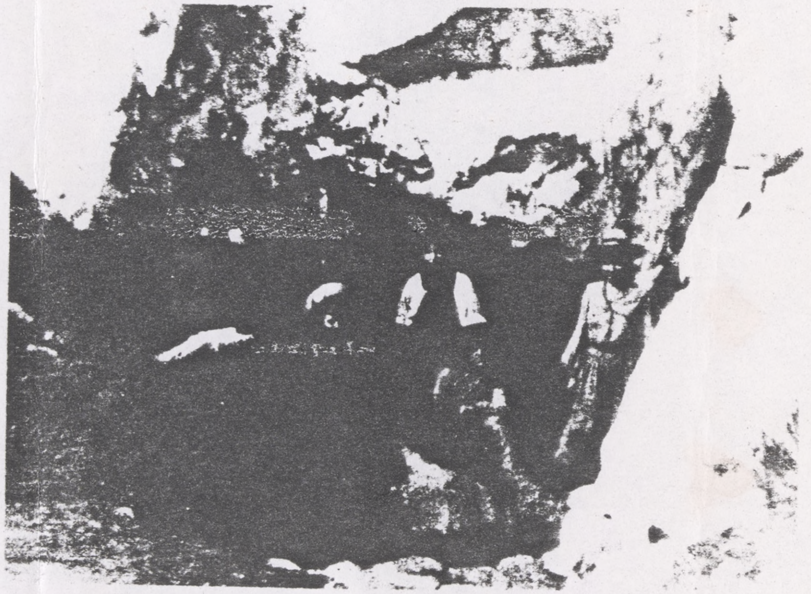
(Above) *The wall the great White Chief led the Crabtrees over to the first discovery of gold.* (Below) *Entrance to the White Chief Mine, the principal mine of the New England Tunnel and Smelting Company in 1874. The 200 foot tunnel is still open.*



Reaching the base, they found themselves in a great amphitheater, a large circular canyon. The Indian spirit stood on a massive mound of granite far below them, with arms outstretched, pointing in every direction. Just as the sun rose over the eastern peaks, the great white chief faced the men, then with an upward thrust of his great arms, he vanished from sight.

Crabtree, Loup and Belden stood bewildered. This, apparently, was the place. Here was where their fortunes would be made. It was a peculiar country of white granite, quartz, and limestone, with contrasts of black and red outcroppings, and beautiful beyond compare. They walked into it and they called it "White Chief."

The three men spent the first hours of the morning exploring, picking up a few ore specimens, giving the country a quick inspection. They had difficulty in reaching the meadow at the bottom of the canyon below them. The sides were steep and filled with broken slabs and loose blocks of granite. A small stream ran through the meadow and Loup followed it until it disappeared into a cave on a hillside of white quartz. The entrance to the cave was low, but wide enough to enter. Loup stooped down, then he let out a yell and shot from the cave as though possessed. He had all but stepped on a large black bear curled up on the floor of the cave.

By mid-morning, the three men decided they should hurry back to file some claims. Returning to their horses, they built trail markers along the way of rocks piled in monument fashion. They marked their path all the way back to the Hockett Trail, making certain they would be able to return and claim the fabulous country revealed to them by the great white chief.

After that month of August 1872 Harry Parole's valley would never again be the same.

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